



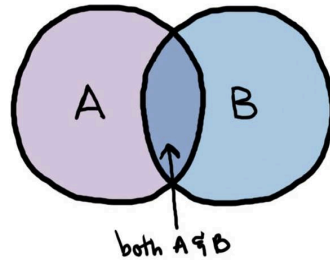
SHORT STORY COMPARATIVE ESSAY

What is comparative writing?

- A comparative essay asks that you compare and contrast two literary texts based on content or form.
- **BUT**, Instead of simply looking at the two separate texts and finding only similarities or differences, focus on how these two texts actually **work together** to create a deeper understanding of a theme or idea.

First develop a list of similarities and differences

- Once you know your basis for comparison, think critically about the similarities and differences between the two stories you are comparing, and compile a list of them.



- Next decide whether the similarities on the whole outweigh the differences or vice versa. Create a thesis statement that reflects their relative weights. *A more complex thesis will usually include both similarities and differences (NOTE: you needn't have both in your literary response!)*

Develop a thesis based on the relative weight of similarities and differences

Differences outweigh similarities:

Ex:

- While Callaghan's "All the Years of Her Life" and Mistry's "Of White Hairs and Cricket" both follow the conventions of the coming-of-age narrative, Callaghan's story adheres more closely to these conventions by allowing its central protagonist to mature. In Mistry's story, by contrast, no real growth occurs.

Similarities outweigh differences:

Ex:

- Although Darwin and Lamarck came to different conclusions about whether acquired traits can be inherited, they shared the key distinction of recognizing that species evolve over time.

Come up with a structure for your essay

1. Alternating Method (ABAB)

- Body Paragraph 1 *Gender Roles in “Boys and Girls”*
- Body Paragraph 2 *Gender Roles in “Battle Royal”*
- Body Paragraph 3 *Gendered Spaces in “Boys and Girls”*
- Body Paragraph 4 *Gendered Spaces in “Battle Royal”*

2. Block Method (AABB)

- Paragraphs 1-2 *The representation of gender in “Boys and Girls”*
- Paragraphs 3-4 *The representation of gender in “Battle Royal”*

1. Alternating method: Point-by-point pattern

- In the alternating method, you find related points common to your central subjects A and B, and alternate between A and B on the basis of these points (ABABAB ...). For instance, a comparative essay on the French and Russian revolutions might examine how both revolutions either encouraged or thwarted innovation in terms of new technology, military strategy, and the administrative system.

2. Block method: Subject-by-subject pattern

- In the block method (AB), you discuss all of A, then all of B. For example, a comparative essay using the block method on the French and Russian revolutions would address the French Revolution in the first half of the essay and the Russian Revolution in the second half. If you choose the block method, however, do not simply append two disconnected essays to an introductory thesis. The B block, or second half of your essay, should refer to the A block, or first half, and make clear points of comparison whenever comparisons are relevant. (“Unlike A, B . . .” or “Like A, B . . .”) This technique will allow for a higher level of critical engagement, continuity, and cohesion.

NOTE ABOUT FORMAT

- ❑ You are **not limited** to only these two formats mentioned above, they are simply suggestions for what structure might work for you.
- ❑ Ultimately your argument and supporting ideas will determine what structure of essay you need.
- ❑ I highly encourage you to plan out your essay beginning with your thesis and see what sort of essay structure that thesis demands. Do not worry about following any single format explicitly, do whatever you feel comes naturally to the position you are trying to convey

Literary Response Topics

1. What is the significance of a name? Many of the characters in these stories do not have explicit names. How do names, or a lack thereof, contribute to the formation of identity in these characters? Compare **and** contrast the presence and purpose of names in **two** of our short stories.
2. Discuss the role of the outsider in relation to culture or race. Consider the relationship between the individual and the community and the power structures that exist within these texts. Compare and contrast the role of the outsider in **two** of our short stories.
3. How is gender constructed and maintained in these texts? Consider the cultural expectations for men and women along with ideals of masculinity and femininity. Compare and contrast the representation of gender in **two** of our short stories.